

MEROPS APIASTER.



CHARACTER GENERICUS,

Rostrum curvatum, compressum, carinatum.

Lingua apice laciniata,

Pedes gressorii.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 182.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

MEROPS dorso ferrugineo, abdomine caudaque viridi-cærulescente, rectricibus duabus longioribus, gula lutea.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 182.

MEROPS.

Bell. av. 16.

Gesn. av. 599.

Aldr. 1. p. 871.

APIASTER.

Briff. av. 4. p. 532. n. 1.

Formosam hanc avem, quam ignorat Britannia, alunt calidioris Europæ variæ regiones; Græcia nec non insulæ quæ in Ægæo mari abundanter,

Creta autem præcipue, in qua exerceri dicitur lepida ista et aëria avium quasi piscatio, cujus meminit Bellonius. Cicada nempe vel aciculæ incurvatæ vel hamo piscatorio affixa e filo longissimo in altum projicitur, in quam celerrime volantem Merops, insectis sedulo invigilans, simul atque adspexerit subito impetu involat, et esca avide devorata, cedit ipse in prædam pueris Cretensibus. Nidum e musco confectum ponit Merops Apiafter in ripis fluviorum.



THE
EUROPEAN BEE-EATER.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Bill curved, compressed, carinated, and sharp-pointed.

Tongue (generally) lacinated at the tip.

Feet gressorial, *i. e.* three toes forward and one backward; and the three lower joints of the middle toe closely joined to those of the outmost.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

BEE-EATER with the back ferruginous, the abdomen and tail blue-green, the two middle tail-feathers longer than the rest, the throat yellow.

THE COMMON BEE-EATER OR MEROPS.

THE BEE-EATER.

Will. p. 147.

LE GUÉPIER.

Buf. 6. p. 480. t. 23.

Pl. enl. 938.

This beautiful bird is a native of many of the warmer parts of Europe, but is never seen in the

British dominions. It is extremely common in Greece and the islands of the Archipelago; and in Crete is more peculiarly plentiful. It is in this latter island that the curious mode of bird-catching described by Bellonius is said to be frequently practised with success, viz. a cicada is fastened on a bent pin, or a fish-hook, and tied to a long line. The insect when thrown from the hand, ascends into the air, and flies with rapidity; the Merops, ever on the watch for insects, seeing the cicada, springs at it, and swallowing the bait, is thus taken by the Cretan boys. The Bee-Eater builds in the banks of rivers, and forms its nest of moss.